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25 Jan

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

SUBJECT : Report that Eighty Percent of the Greek
Population on Cyprus is Communist

The report that eighty percent of the Greek population on Cyprus is Communist is an exaggeration.

According to the information we have, the proscribed Communist Party of Cyprus has a membership of somewhat under 6,000. The Greek population according to the last census is 416,986. The local communist party, composed almost exclusively of Greek Cypriots, does attract support among the populace and probably would secure at least 20% of the vote were it a legal party. It at present exercises control over a large segment of organized labor and does control the municipal councils in three of the six major cities of the island.

However, in assessing the overall strength and capability of the Cypriot Communist Party, it is important to note that Greek Cypriots as a group are chiefly interested at present in the struggle with Great Britain for self-determination. Greek Cypriot

Witchell

nationalists, which include the bulk of the population, under the direction of the Orthodox Church, have carried on this struggle. While the communists have sought to form a united front with the nationalists, they have been rebuffed repeatedly and recent events indicate a worsening of relations between the two groups.

In a self-governing Cyprus, the nationalists would form the first government. Such a government would almost certainly continue proscription of the communist party, and would take restrictive action against left-wing leaders. Thus while communism is and will remain a potentially dangerous problem on Cyprus, there is no evidence at this time that the conservative majority of Greek Cypriots would permit a communist drive to assume a dominant position on the island.

SECRET
ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

OCI:HDSheeldon:mcm (24 Jan 58)

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